

Community Planning

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FACTSHEET

“Community planning is a process led by councils in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, a long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people lives. “ (DoE, 2013)
The process is as important as the plan, and this should allow for all sections of the community to become involved in and to develop a sense of ownership over the plan.
The process will also provide the opportunity for equal opportunity to influence decisions and in the long term strengthen the community.

Key principles

Civic and Community Leadership - new opportunities will also place new demands on the leaders.

Focus on Outcomes - longer term and shared outcomes which will benefit the quality of life of communities.

Partnership Working - to improve connections between regional, local and neighbourhood levels. Requires commitment to strategic vision being translated into action on the ground. Must involve the public sector, community and voluntary sector and private sector. Need ongoing changes to culture, attitudes and behaviours to achieve genuine community focus.

Participation and Engagement - this is the cornerstone of community planning. There is no fixed approach but participation and engagement should be open and inclusive and equality considerations should be taken into account and efforts made to remove barriers to engagement.

The Plan;

Should maximise resources and create effective and efficient outcome focused service delivery.

It will require the ability to be innovative, solution focused rather than problem focused, open flexible, committed and deliverable. The long term vision should stretch 10-15 years into the future. This is then divided into shorter term plans with clear vision, actions and targets.

The outcomes to be achieved by community plans are:

Material Benefits: Employment; improved housing; improved health.

Structures: Partnership working; inclusive representation; communities influencing decisions.

Capacities: People are more confident and involved; community groups are able to achieve their goals; public agencies are able to engage communities; community groups and organisations are able to work together.

The Community

Local communities will be involved in the planning, implementation and reviewing stages of the plan. The methods and the level of engagement may vary between councils, between groups and will also be dependent on the purpose, time and resources available.

Communities will have a variety of roles in the development and implementation of the plan:

Community Roles

Users and Beneficiaries of the activities and funds of the partnership. This is the most basic level of engagement.

Advisers to the partnership through their involvement in consultations, working parties and evaluations which seek their guidance and feedback.

Contributors to Management through membership of forums and steering groups that work alongside staff supervising progress on partnership activities.

Decision Makers primarily through their membership of the partnership board, but also when periodic consultations are taking place about strategic choices and other major decisions.

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Key supports

Good governance and clear accountability.

Strong relationships and links between the local and regional.

Evidence and learning

Is required:

- To assess community needs appropriately and accurately
- To gain a shared understanding of need
- To provide a basis for joint planning and targeting of resources
- To assist in performance management and the setting and monitoring of targets
- To improve efficiency and reduce duplication
- To promote mutual understanding by sharing key organisational information
- To improve customer service and promote consistency in customer care.

Community Development

This will enable all communities to engage and participate in community planning, it enables people to come together to influence or take decisions about issues that matter to them and that affect their lives.

Community Planning and RPA

Under RPA 26 councils will be reduced to 11 from April 2015 and they will have responsibility for community planning.

The councils CEO's and community planning managers are...

- Fermanagh and Omagh Council - Brendan Hegarty & Sonia McAnulla
- Lisburn City and Castlereagh Council - Dr Theresa Donaldson & Catherine McWhirter
- Mid and East Antrim - Zanne Donaghy & Jackie Patton
- Causeway Coast and Glens Council - David Jackson
- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon - Roger Wilson
- Mid Ulster - Anthony Tohill
- Belfast - Suzanne Wylie & David Cuthbert
- Newry and Mourne and Down Council - Liam Hannaway & Heather McKee
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Council - Jacqui Dixon & Alison Keenan
- Derry and Strabane Council - John Kelpie
- North Down and Ards Council - Stephen Reid

Some of the new powers and responsibilities of the new councils are:

- Roads
- Housing
- Planning, spatial and community
- Urban planning and community development
- Local economic development

Current work undertaken by Departments will be either handed over to local government or joint working arrangements developed. This includes:

- Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and proposed plans
- Transfer of Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes to local government
- Transfer of Rural Development Programmes
- Joint working between Council and Public Health Agency
- Social Investment Fund

The information in this factsheet comes directly from "Guidance to Councils; Community planning foundation programme" DoE 2013 and Community Planning Toolkit, Community Places.